

INFORMATION REPORT
CONFIDENTIAL

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COUNTRY

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SUBJECT North Korean Farmers' Reaction to the War

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25X1A

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1. Just before the beginning of the attack on South Korea in June 1950, the North Korean government had mobilized and had under military control approximately ten million persons.* All men and women from 18 to 45 were given military training and received military certificates; persons between 45 and 60 were mobilized for work in mines and munition plants; and persons over 60 were to serve in local self-defense units detailed to handle inspection of highway travel.
2. With such general mobilization, farming in North Korea suffered, since the farmers were too busily engaged in military duties to be able to do their own work. The women left in the villages would have continued with the farm work, but they were mobilized for weaving cotton cloth, and all men remaining at home were required to make a pair of straw sandals each day.
3. The farm situation deteriorated again because of the drought which occurred in mid-summer. With the drought, the damage from military attacks, and the deliberate devastation caused by the retreating North Korean troops, much of the farmland has reverted to wilderness. Production for the 1950 harvest was barely thirty percent of average, and the food shortage for the winter is expected to be acute.
4. In the Wonsan area, the farm population at first felt that the South Korean forces would immediately drive back and annihilate the North Korean army. They were discouraged when North Korean leaders streamed south after the fall of Seoul but regained hope with the entry of UN forces into the north. Inhabitants of the area felt that the UN would assist them against the threat of famine.**

25X1A

* **Comment.** This number seems rather large, but it presumably includes all persons in self-defense units, military manufacturing installations, and related production.

25X1A

** **Comment.** How much of this attitude was dependent upon continued UN success in the north is not indicated. The Wonsan area has not been previously reported as noticeably anti-Communist and would appear, from this statement, to be rather opportunist than firmly attached to the UN.

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